



**MANSFIELD ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN**  
**Wednesday, May 4, 2016**  
**Mansfield Senior Center**  
**DRAFT - MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Maggie Ferron (staff), Pat Schneider (staff), Sarah Dufresne (staff), Danielle Annibalini (staff), Judy Stoughton, Acey Neel, Pam Roberts, Kathy Ward, Lisa Dahn, Marianne Legassey, Ana Zeller, Heather Lasky, Susan Daley, Jane Goldman, Jen Scanlon

**Regrets:** Lisa Young, Rachel Leclerc

**Guests:** Barb Gardina, Ruth Freedman, Johannah Gorgone

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
CALL TO ORDER	Maggie Ferron called the meeting to order at 5:46pm.	
CONSENT AGENDA	Approval of the Minutes of April 6, 2016.	<i>The March 2, 2016 meeting minutes were approved.</i>
TOPICAL DISCUSSION, APPROACHES TO PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR	<p>Marianne Legassey presented Child Labs' approach to encouraging pro-social behavior in its preschoolers; Barb Giardina discussed how the practice is applied to infants. Generally, they use "intentionality" and positive encouragement to incentivize kindness. Key words- empowerment, accomplishment, choice. Creates a way for teachers and families to talk about kindness and generates family "buy-in."</p> <p>Ruth Freedman commented that human brains are programmed to focus on negative responses and ignore positive feedback, so it's important to flip the amount of time spent criticizing and the amount of time spent encouraging.</p> <p>Lisa Dahn presented CCC's "you can't say you can't play" philosophy, which is based off of the work of Vivian Paley. There is no rejection in any way for the students, as they're away from their families. They will develop the ability to deal with rejection later. The approach to conflict solution is to identify the problem, validate the child's (or children's) feelings, and then have the teacher actively listen as the children negotiate a solution. This amounts to "technical assistance." The final step is "closure," in which the children and teacher acknowledge that they used the strategies to solve the problem. The kids come up with solutions that they believe are fair.</p> <p>Ruth Freedman commented that teenagers who</p>	

	<p>perceive that they can solve problems are more likely to be emotionally healthy and successful.</p> <p>Heather Lasky presented her new “Second Step” kit that is being used (or rolled out for use next year) in the MPS preschool program. There are puppets and a script contained inside that teach the students dialogue about empathy, friendship, and the day-to-day practice of kindness. The students in her classes can earn stars, and prizes for kindness. They have started to report not just their own kind acts, but also the acts of others.</p> <p>Ruth Freedman commented that teaching self-talk is extremely helpful since it will be going on in these children’s brains for their entire lives. Stressing positive thoughts encourages kindness and self-acceptance.</p> <p>Susan Daley presented the visual cues used at Willow House, e.g., “Hands are for... (holding, hugging, etc). They use sign language with small children to help them express their desires and avoid the frustration that may cause them to act out. They share these strategies with parents to encourage them to bring them home and practice. They also anticipate what’s difficult to try to avoid the problem in the first place.</p> <p>Ruth Freedman commented that vague praise is not as helpful as specific, definite identification of the praise worthy behavior- trying to avoid “good” language. She also pointed members to her website0 positive parenting CT.</p> <p>Sarah Dufresne presented on the Mansfield Youth Services programs in place to help kids learn pro-social behaviors at an older age, e.g. the Girls Group that helps middle-school girls develop friendships. They are going to start a Boys Group as well with the help of Parks and Rec. COPE and Big Friends also exist to help guide kids through tough times and avoid acting out against themselves and others. Allows younger kids to learn from older kids and witness good modeling.</p> <p>Pat Schneider commented on programs that she has seen be successful such as “peaceful playgrounds.”</p>	
STAFF REPORT	<p><b>Staff Report:</b> Maggie Ferron</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be QE money left over in ’15-’16 funds, as about \$950 won’t be spent as allocated on CPR/1<sup>st</sup> Aid. Judy Stoughton discussed her efforts to purchase kits to help kids with emotional challenges. About \$400 allocated to this use.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Community RFP to be submitted 5/18</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising Readers going well, thanks to Janice Boltseridge and Anne Bladen of CDL.</li> <li>• Budget: 30 hours maintained for Early Childhood Coordinator position.</li> <li>• The Community RFP for school readiness funds is almost finished, will be delivered to the OEC by hand on March 18. Same amount of money/hours of care; fewer slots. Unsure as to final status of grant due to instability of state budget.</li> <li>• August MAC meeting is CANCELLED.</li> <li>• Susan Daley and Ana Zeller updated group on progress of food quality &amp; sourcing initiative. They are working to improve food at public schools, working with administrators, and how to be more flexible in the rules related to children's food so as to be able to serve more local food.</li> </ul>	
NEW BUSINESS	<b>Next Meeting Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey of early childhood environment-develop questions and strategy for publication.</li> </ul>	
ADJOURN	<p>The meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.</p> <p><b>Next Regular MAC Meeting, Wednesday, June 1, Mansfield Senior Center</b></p> <p>Respectfully submitted, Maggie Ferron, Early Childhood Services Coordinator</p>	

All Mansfield Children ages birth through 8 years old are healthy, successful learners, and their families are connected to the community.